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# MAGDALENE MATTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF MAGDALENE COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE



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# MAGDALENE MATTERS

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Magdalene Matters is published by the Alumni and Development Office, twice yearly, in Michaelmas and Easter terms. For further information or if you would like to submit content for future issues please contact the Communications Officer, Mr Matthew Moon, or the Editor Mrs Corinne Lloyd.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of Magdalene College Cambridge.

Front cover, River Court, courtesy of Mr Matthew Moon.



Telephone Campaign Callers.

## COMMENT from the Development Director

Dear Members,

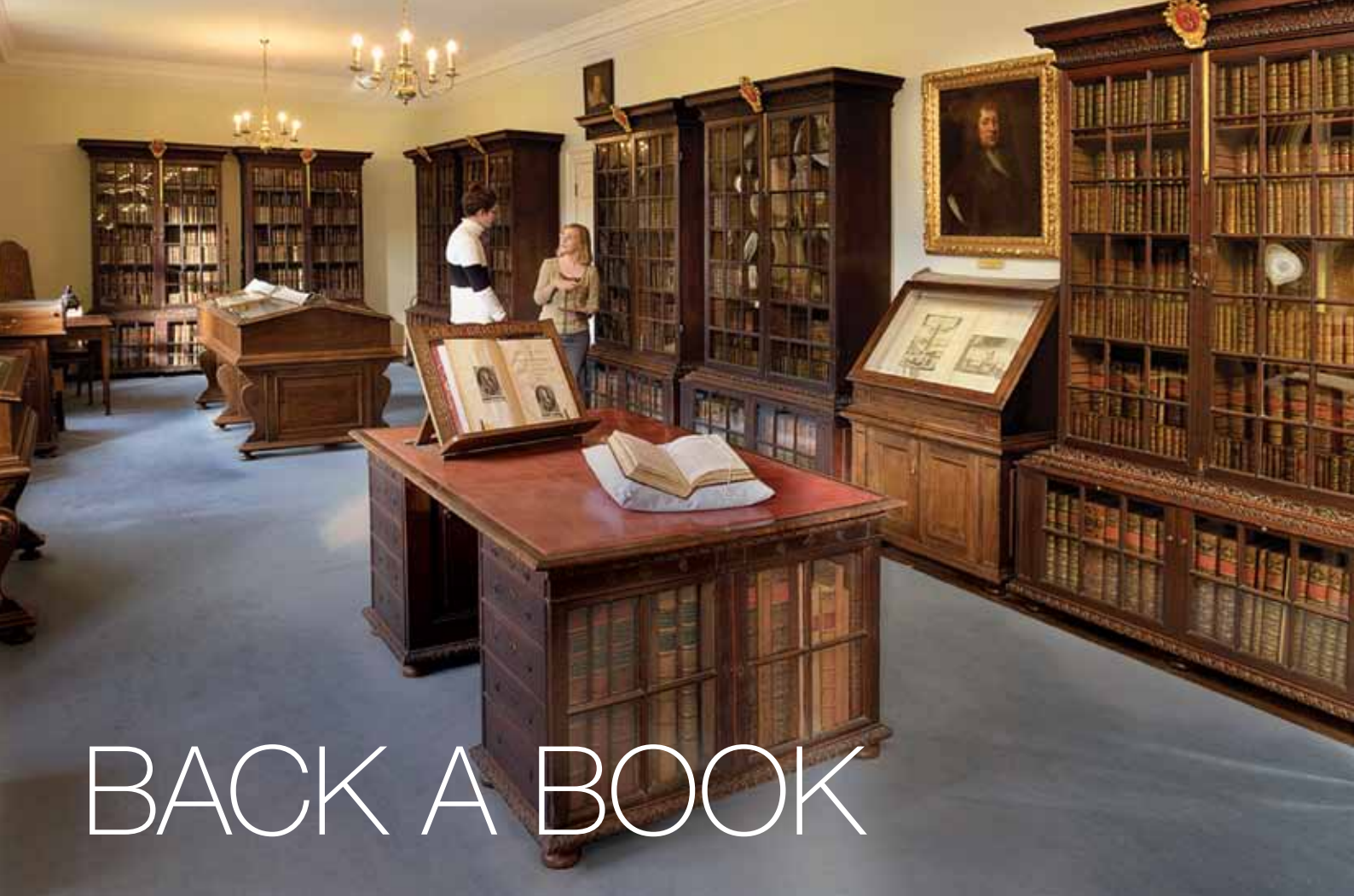
Two years ago we launched the College's *Future Foundations* Campaign with the aim of raising £25 million. We had not attempted such an ambitious undertaking before and any suggestion that we would more than double the £10 million in the kitty at the time of the launch in March 2017 would have been met with a polite but disbelieving smile, nothing more. And yet, two years on, this is precisely what we have accomplished thanks to your loyalty and commitment to the College.

We've all but raised the money for the new library which is taking shape in the north-west corner of the Fellows' Garden. The entire project is being funded from donations and it is true to say that the Master, Fellows and the students are simply overwhelmed by the response from our Members and Friends who have made this enormous achievement possible. When the idea of a new Library for Magdalene was conceived some felt that the idea of building a new library was too ambitious and could potentially impact negatively on the limited resources of the College.

Your amazing response, your generosity, has put paid to these concerns and we are all looking forward to the opening of this important addition to the College precinct in September 2020. We have however, also raised very significant funds for student support, bursaries and scholarships – almost £4 million so far. A wonderful success story thus far, thank you. But we still have more to do, not least accomplish Phase II of the Campaign which will focus on the iconic Pepys Building and still more student support.

Over 1400 of you have supported the Campaign with a donation so far and it is true that every gift, however modest, does make a real difference. We are enormously grateful to each and every one of you who have chosen to help, thank you.

**CORINNE LLOYD**  
EDITOR AND DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



# BACK A BOOK

The Pepys Library and the Historic Collections of Magdalene College have launched a new fundraising initiative to help conserve and repair our books and manuscripts: *Back a Book*.

The initiative was launched at our ‘Friends of the Pepys Library’ event last July, and has had immediate success, with six of our items for 2018–2019 already having found support. Items which are still awaiting support are now on our dedicated *Back a Book* webpage, and the next group of items to support will be launched this summer.

*Back a Book* will offer supporters the chance to see how their financial assistance can help conserve and repair individual items in our libraries, with the expert help of the Cambridge Colleges’ Conservation Consortium. The Consortium, a team of book and paper conservators who work exclusively for the Cambridge Colleges, are based at Corpus Christi and provide specialist conservation and preservation care for the wide variety of materials housed in Cambridge library and archive collections.

The *Back a Book* initiative has been inspired by the generosity of our Friends of the Pepys Library and Historic Collections, who have supported recent purchases for the libraries including the new oak storage units for the Old Library’s Ferrar papers and prints, and new curtains for the Pepys Library. However, you need not be part of the

Friends to support *Back a Book*: it is open to all who have an interest in supporting the libraries’ work.

The historic libraries at Magdalene College have aided scholarship and provided public enjoyment for centuries. Through careful monitoring and professional conservation of the books, manuscripts and prints in the Pepys Library and Old Library, we can ensure that these items are studied and exhibited for years to come. The *Back a Book* scheme will certainly help us towards achieving this aim.

[www.magd.cam.ac.uk/pepys/back-a-book](http://www.magd.cam.ac.uk/pepys/back-a-book)



# FELLOWS' NEWS

## PROFESSOR EAMON DUFFY (1979)



At the end of last year Heythrop College, University of London, conferred on Professor Duffy an Honorary Doctor

of Divinity. Professor Duffy remarked that “this is rather bitter sweet, as it will be Heythrop’s last degree congregation, because the College is closing its doors for good at the end of this term with five centuries of theological study behind it, and one of the finest specialist libraries anywhere (that at least will go to Senate House)”.

## PROFESSOR PAUL DUPREE (1996)



We are pleased to announce that Graduate Student Tutor and Director of Studies in Natural Sciences, Professor

Paul Dupree, was named a 2018 Highly Cited Researcher, with the Dupree Group’s research among the top 1% most cited works worldwide in the ‘cross field’ category. Professor Dupree commented that: “I’m very proud to be named a 2018 Highly Cited Researcher. This reflects the outstanding work of our group members over many years to produce reproducible, exciting findings addressing the big questions in science that directly impact society.”

## DR GARETH PEARCE (2008)



Dr Pearce has been given an exciting new appointment. He is now Adjunct Professor in the School of

Environmental and Rural Science at the University of New England in Australia. The appointment is intended to enhance collaborations in the areas of Sustainable Livestock Production and Animal Welfare Science.

## DR CECILIA BRASSETT (2009)



Dr Brassett, Director of Studies in Medical Sciences and University Clinical Anatomist, has been awarded a Pilkington

Prize for Teaching Excellence. Each year the Pilkington Prize is awarded to teachers from across the University who have made a substantial contribution to the teaching programme of their Department, Faculty or the University as a whole. 12 prizes are awarded each year, with nominations made by each of the six Schools. The Pilkington Prizes were initiated by Sir Alastair Pilkington, graduate of Trinity College, engineer, businessman and the first Chairman of the Cambridge Foundation. He believed passionately that the quality of teaching was a crucial part of the University’s ability to continue to attract undergraduates of the highest calibre. The Pilkington Prizes Fund was created in July 1992 and the first prizes were awarded in 1994. Cecilia will receive her award from the Vice-Chancellor at the formal reception and ceremony at the end of June.

## DR SARAH CADDY (2015)



Junior Research Fellow and Veterinary Surgeon Dr Sarah Caddy has become a lead volunteer for the charity StreetVet.

This is a nationwide network of veterinary professionals that offer free services to the pets of homeless people. The Cambridge team visit a number of city centre streets and hostels once a week, carrying a rucksack full of veterinary supplies. Vets are able to perform full clinical exams from the rucksack kit, as well as supply vaccines and common medications for any of the 25 dogs registered in Cambridge.

## DR ROBERT HOYE (2016)



Dr Hoye has been named as one of Forbes’ 2019’s 30 Under 30 rising talent in Science and Healthcare

in Europe, recognising his research on semiconductors and tandem photovoltaics. Semiconductors are essential to the world of electronics, and Dr Hoye knows this better than most. Having already developed a way to manufacture semiconductors faster than industry-standard methods during his Ph.D., he then went on to start an independent group to create more resilient next-generation semiconductors, using a £500,000 seed fund from the Royal Academy of Engineering.

## DR FARID AHMED (2019)



Dr Ahmed was admitted as an Official Fellow in Economics in January. Dr Ahmed is also Director of Studies

and College Lecturer in Economics for Magdalene alongside his role as a Research Associate of the Faculty of Economics. Dr Ahmed completed his PhD in Economics at Cambridge in 2017; his research interests draw from Macroeconomics, Time Series Econometrics and Finance with a particular focus on asset pricing. He is also interested in production networks, particularly with regards to input-output linkages. Dr Farid previously taught at LUMS in 2009–10 as a Teaching Fellow and has also served as a Teaching Fellow at the University of Cambridge.

## MR JAMES WOODALL (2017)

Royal Literary Fund Teaching Bye-Fellow, Mr Woodall, has had an article published in issue 124 of *Lettre*



*International* entitled *Arkadianismus*. The text is a translation by writer and journalist Wiebke Hüster, who visited Magdalene last month. The article is about Britain and the EU and is an amalgam of two long essays that James wrote over 2017/2018 following the referendum result. Professor Nick Boyle's (1964) *New European* article on a similar theme is cited at some length. Dr Oliver Haardt (2017) did some superb supplementary work on Hüster's German translation.

#### DR HANNAH CRITCHLOW (2003)



Dr Critchlow was invited to become a Team Member for an initial term of 4 years with the European Dana Alliance for the Brain (EDAB). This is a tribute to her neuroscience expertise and public communication contributions. EDAB is an alliance of more than 270 eminent European neuroscientists, whose mission is to advance public education about the importance and

benefits of brain research, in easily understood layman's language.

#### PROFESSOR HARRIET RITVO (2019)



At the start of April we welcomed Professor Harriet Ritvo as our visiting American Yip Fellow. Professor Ritvo

is the Arthur J Conner Professor of History at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, her research interests include Modern British/Empire History, Environmental History and Animal Studies. Her current research concerns wildness and domestication.

#### PROFESSOR EVA-MARIA THÜNE (2019)



Last term we welcomed Visiting Fellow, Professor Eva-Maria Thüne. Professor Thüne

has taken part in international research projects and works with various European institutions. Author of many published works, she has received the prize of

the Accademia di Studi Italo-Tedeschi di Merano and has been a Fellow of the Bogliasco Foundation. From February until August 2017 she was Bologna-Clare Hall-Fellow here in Cambridge, and is now a Life Member of Clare Hall.

#### DR HUGO AZERAD (2001) DR STEPHEN EGLEN (2017)



Dr Azerad and Dr Eglen have both been nominated for Cambridge University Students Union Student-Led Teaching Awards (SLTAs). The SLTAs reward outstanding teaching and student support and are entirely led by student feedback and testimonials. The SLTAs are a unique opportunity for students to recognise the exceptional contribution of teaching and nonteaching staff to their education and to highlight the kinds of teaching and support that they value and would like to see more of. Congratulations to both Dr Azerad and Dr Eglen.

## Remembered in Stone

Magdalene Resident Honorary Fellow, **MRS LIDA CARDOZO KINDERSLEY MBE (2015)**, is Britain's best-known letter cutter and is responsible for many beautiful gravestones, plaques and carvings.

Lida carved the gravestone for the recently discovered grave of William Blake. The exact site of Blake's grave had been lost for many years. Blake died in obscurity in 1827 and was buried in an unmarked common grave in Bunhill Fields, a London cemetery. After two years of research and painstaking work to locate the grave, members of the Blake Society discovered his final resting place and

commissioned a gravestone funded by donations from around the world.

The Portland limestone memorial carries the inscription "Here lies William Blake, 1757-1827, Poet Artist Prophet", followed by two lines from his poem 'Jerusalem'.

Lida also recently created the memorial stone for Stephen Hawking, which was laid outside the late scientist's room in Caius Court at Gonville and Caius College. The words "Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet" are engraved along with Hawking's famous equation of the entropy of a black hole.



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# MAGDALENE IN LIVERPOOL

On Monday 18 March 2019, the College held its biennial large-scale Outreach Event in Liverpool. Previously held at Goodison Park, the home of Everton Football Club, this year the event moved to the Museum of Liverpool.

Offering brilliant purpose-built facilities and the opportunity to engage with the museum's collections, the venue proved to be a fantastic location that reflected the College's academic focus and strong relationship with the local Merseyside community.

As part of the day, 350 Year 10 and 11 students, along with teachers from 38 schools from across the College's Link Areas of Merseyside and North Wales, took part in a number of sessions run by undergraduate students, Fellows and the Schools Liaison Officer. Sessions were designed to give attendees a fuller picture of the opportunities available to them at the University of Cambridge. Students took part in two taster sample lectures, one on Medicine from Director of Studies Dr Cecilia Brassett (2009) examining the intricacies of anatomy with some willing volunteers. Meanwhile, College Lecturer Mr Alastair Mills (2006) gave students an insight into the field of Public Law. There was also the opportunity for attendees to ask plenty of questions to our students, academics and Fellows that had made the trip to Liverpool.

Magdalene students who hail from the Merseyside area, many of whom had attended the College's Outreach Events and Residential ran a special session titled 'From Liverpool to Cambridge'. The session focused on some of the worries and concerns about moving away from home to study in Cambridge. The session dealt with many of the fears of



**Mr Sandy Mill, Schools Liaison Officer.**

prospective students in a frank, honest and uplifting way and it showed them that students like themselves can, and do, go to Cambridge and achieve amazing things.

The Academic Office would like to thank the Fellows, students and staff who were involved in such a successful day, and for continuing to make a difference in the vital outreach work that the College undertakes.

## AREA LINKS SCHEME EXPLAINED

*The University assigns each College one or more geographic areas through its Area Links Scheme. The Scheme enables Cambridge to build effective, coherent relationships with schools and colleges across the UK, giving schools and colleges a direct way of staying in touch with the University via specific contact points, while helping each College to better understand specific regions and their unique local educational environments. Magdalene's assigned Link Areas are Merseyside and North Wales.*

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## View From a Student

# LIVERPOOL TO MAGDALENE

BY MISS SARAH WEST (2017), 2ND YEAR LAW STUDENT

Having previously attended the Liverpool Outreach Event when I was in Year 11, it was important for me to return but with the hindsight of the impact that the event can have on breaking down preconceived notions of what a Cambridge student is. Cambridge's reputation as a top university can often make it seem unattainable to those coming from state school backgrounds who may think that they either aren't good enough to apply or won't fit in once they get there.

From the very beginning of the day, it was clear that some of the stereotypes and preconceptions that existed when I first attended the event as a Year 11 student still remained and are a contributing factor in putting off many talented and academically able students from applying to Cambridge.

With first-hand experience of studying at Cambridge and being part of Magdalene, I've experienced for myself just how false those stereotypes are. Having been on the other side of the event, I felt it was important to inform the Year 11s what studying here is really like. This also made it vital that, through the various sessions of the day and particularly the 'From Liverpool to Cambridge' session, we broke down those stereotypes and made it clear that, for those who want to, applying and attending Cambridge is completely possible. From speaking to the students, it was clear that many believed that either their background would prevent them from gaining a place or they would be judged and treated differently once here.

The 'From Liverpool to Cambridge' session allowed us to give an uncensored and truthful insight into the life of a Cambridge student, dispel the stereotypes, and address the concerns the Year 11s had. The students appeared to be much more receptive given that the presentation was being given by Cambridge students who, like themselves, came from Liverpool and had previously been in their position. They were very engaged, asking many questions, wanting to know as much as possible about what student life was like day-to-day, as well as the differences between Cambridge and other universities.

Cambridge is an intense environment that isn't for everybody but it is important that those who would thrive and benefit from the teaching style aren't deterred from applying just because of preconceptions or where they come from.

I found it very fulfilling to be able to give back to the event that had first encouraged me to apply, as well to give an insight into Cambridge life and to help attendees make the tough decision of where they wish to study at university.

The event overall, and the 'Liverpool to Magdalene' session especially, were very successful. A number of students commented that their view of the University and Cambridge students had changed, and that it would be somewhere they would consider applying to. For me, this means that we were able to have a positive impact and demonstrate that Cambridge is somewhere they are fully capable of studying at and enjoying with people from a diverse range of backgrounds.



Anatomy Lecture with Dr Cecilia Brassett.



Current Students leading the Liverpool to Magdalene session.

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# The Exomars Rover Field-Trials

## IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?

BY DR BENJAMIN DOBKE (2004)

Barely 30 miles away from Magdalene, in the unglamorous town of Stevenage, Europe is building its very first robotic Martian rover.

Like its American predecessors (NASA's Sojourner, MER, and MSL) it will roam the surface of the red planet, acting as a remotely controlled geologist to further our understanding of Mars. Over the past several years I have been fortunate enough to help test that rover on Earth, training the operators to utilise every precious second after touchdown occurs on the red planet in two years' time.

### *The age-old question*

Since ancient times, Mars has held a special fascination for us humans. Our closest habitable neighbour, and often dominating the night sky with its deep reddish hue, it invoked the Romans to label it the god of war. The fascination built, both in science and science fiction. Even until the 20th century when the first probes flew past in the 1960s, there was in fact no definitive proof that primitive civilisations, however unlikely, were not active on its red surface. As our understanding of the red planet improved, we learned of a world that many millions of years ago harboured oceans of water similar to Earth, along with an ancient, dense atmosphere. Those oceans have long since evaporated away, the planet too small and of insufficient gravity to keep its precious atmosphere intact, leaving behind only small frozen remnants of once great oceans.

The question that now occupies many planetary scientists is: in the period before Mars changed to a desert planet, were there sufficient time and the correct ingredients to form life? This is where the Exomars mission comes into play.

### *Exomars*

The Exomars mission is funded and managed by the European Space Agency (ESA), the European equivalent to the more famous National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA). The mission has two separate parts: The Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO) that was successfully inserted into Martian orbit in October 2016, and a surface rover that will be launched in 2020, hopefully landing safely at the Oxia Planum region on 19 March 2021. In keeping with the tradition of naming Martian rovers (MSL became Curiosity),



Close up of rover in Tabernas, Spain.

the Exomars Rover was recently named after Rosalind Franklin, the English chemist and X-ray crystallographer who helped Cambridge's Watson and Crick discover the double helix structure of DNA.

The rover itself has a large suite of instruments to help it achieve its primary mission goal of finding past evidence of life. The scientific instruments broadly fall into four categories: panoramic imagery ('PanCAM'), ground penetrating radar ('WISDOM'), a two metre subsurface drill, and a small chemical laboratory that will process the samples collected by the drill and analyse them for past evidence of life. The subsurface drill is unique to the mission and the first to drill so deep. This is crucial, as it is potentially the only place to find life; UV radiation from the sun activates chlorine compounds in Martian soil, making the first few centimetres toxic to life.

### *Exomars Field Trials (ExoFiT)*

Anybody who has participated in the May Bumps knows that, whenever you're given a really short time in which to perform at your very best, there is only one sure-fire way to succeed. Practise. And that has essentially been my job for the past three years at Airbus Defence & Space: to help the rover operators practise their science operations





**The ExoFiT team in Atacama Chile.**

and refine the process of using their instruments to search for life, while still here on Earth. With the 90-day mission costing a total of €1.3 billion, and therefore each day on the surface billing in at €1.5 million, practising away those pesky mistakes is absolutely vital.

To do this we first had to build a representative Exomars rover. This has all the main functionality of the flight-specification rover, in terms of size, mass, locomotion capability, and the complex visual based guidance software. Crucially, it also has the representative instruments on which the scientists can practise. After you have the correct hardware, you need two other important ingredients: a group of about 50 scientists to remotely command the rover instruments (and argue with each other...); and a place on Earth that is as close as geologically possible to Mars. In essence, the surface of Mars is similar to a high-altitude, arid desert on Earth minus the atmosphere. When operating in Europe, we tend to cheat a little, using the Tabernas desert in southern Spain. Famous as a filming site for old spaghetti westerns and Indiana Jones, is it the only true desert in Europe, although the geology is not fully representative of Mars. If you really want to go to Mars while having the comfort of Earth under your feet, the only place is the Atacama Desert in Chile. A true Martian wouldn't be seen dead anywhere else. Here you'll find an environment that, when seen through the PanCAM instruments, looks almost identical to Mars. (Apart from the pick-up truck hiding over the other side of the hill...)

In October 2018, the first ExoFiT field trial was performed; I had the dubious honour of being the project manager, juggling 50 people and a Martian rover. Now, the south

of Spain is renowned as being one of the driest places in Europe, but thanks to a certain Hurricane Leslie, it turned out to be the wettest October in 30 years. Despite this, and a few lethal flash floods later, through a combination of careful re-planning and a break in the weather we managed to complete an entire 'Exomars Reference Cycle'. This is what the Exomars rover really wants to do while on Mars. Essentially it involves performing a visual survey of the immediate area, locating an outcrop of half-buried rocks that could have harboured past life, approaching with the ground penetrating radar, and drilling in a suitable area near to where the outcrop meets the land-surface. The rover would then remain stationary for a few days while performing the vital chemical analysis that checks for past signs of life.

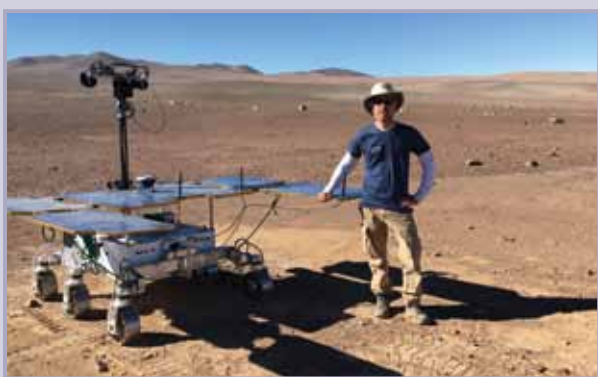
With the Spanish field trial completed we packed up again, and in February 2019 shipped ourselves out to the remote Atacama, staying at the European Southern Observatory Residence Hotel. Because it was another famous filming site, recently used for the James Bond movie *Quantum of Solace* (2008), some began to ask if I was just seeking out my favourite filming locations or actually trying to help train for Exomars operations. Regardless, three flights later we found ourselves in a truly stunning landscape taken straight out of the pages of a Martian holiday brochure. This time the weather was predictably arid; the Atacama is the second driest place on Earth, after all (the first being an even more impractical valley in Antarctica). However, although the weather was on our side, Chilean customs was not and the sight of a large six wheeled Martian rover coupled with a less-than-thorough packing list meant an agonising seven-day delay. Again though, with some quick changes and a little

*...continued*

luck, we managed to achieve a great mission simulation, continuing with the task of training the instrument scientists to do their best. This time we also concentrated on the important 'egress' phase of the Exomars mission, in which the rover drives off its landing platform and performs tasks to help calibrate all the various systems.

### *The Future*

The conclusion of the ExoFiT field trials this year doesn't mean we're ready for launch. A huge list of other tests are planned over the next two years to ensure that both hardware and humans are ready for the mission itself. And if life is eventually found on Mars, either by the little rover from Stevenage or some other future mission, it opens up some other very interesting possibilities. If it is identical to our own form of DNA, did our first seeds of life in fact originate from Mars, transferred to Earth via meteorites where we have flourished ever since? In other words, are we actually all Martians? Alternatively, if it is a completely different form of life from that which we already know, it would mean that two close-by planets were able to produce life in entirely different ways, implying that simple forms of life are likely to be everywhere in the Universe, given the right conditions. Answering these fundamental questions so close to home would allow us to see the other planets of our galaxy in an entirely different light, confidently imagining them teeming with microbial life. The Exomars rover hopes to be one of the first links in a long chain that is seeking to answer those questions.



**DR BENJAMIN DOBKE (2004)** studied for a PhD in Astrophysics at Magdalene between 2004 and 2007. After Cambridge he worked at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), where he was involved in designing the next generation of space telescopes after Hubble. Since moving back to Europe, he has worked as a project manager at Airbus Defence & Space Ltd on a range of future space missions, from early stage concepts to projects preparing for launch such as Exomars.

## *The Power Scholarships*

The Power Scholarship programme was founded in the 1960s between Magdalene College and the University of Michigan and supported more than 50 students over three decades, fostering a culture of collaboration between the two universities.



**Mr Eugene Power and Power Scholars c1988**

The scholarships were supported by Mr Eugene Power (1967), an entrepreneur, philanthropist, Honorary Fellow of Magdalene and alumnus of both universities.

A programme of research collaboration between the University of Cambridge and the University of Michigan has grown out of The Power Scholarships, now called The Michigan-Cambridge Research Initiative (MCRI). Cambridge and Michigan are incorporating the type of collaboration and exchange exemplified by the Power Scholars programme into their current relationship. The MCRI provides a formal mechanism and funding to encourage collaborations between the two universities, as well as support to develop partnerships and share expertise.

As the MCRI develops, both universities hope to create a Research Scholarship Programme to enable doctoral student exchange between the two institutions in key research areas, primarily in engineering and computer science, amongst other initiatives.

Earlier this year, nine of the Power Scholars returned to Cambridge for a dinner at Magdalene. Attendees heard from senior academics from both universities about the partnership, and two Power Scholars, Lord Howard Flight (1966) and Dr Christine Martin (1988), spoke to celebrate the renewal of the collaboration between Michigan and Cambridge.

# BUILT ON 'POWERFUL' FOUNDATIONS

BY DR CHRISTINE MARTIN (1988)

The Power Scholarship, an exchange between the University of Michigan and Magdalene, was established in 1968 by the generosity of Mr Eugene Power (1967).

In 1978, the programme was extended to include New Hall, and hence women. 1988 saw another first. With Magdalene becoming co-ed, I was the first Scholar to have a choice of College. I chose Magdalene. I have never regretted that decision.

October 1988 may still stir mixed emotions from Magdalene Members. For some, the admission of females, Black October, black armbands and the loss of the last all-male Oxbridge college may re-open an old wound and evoke a sense of loss. For others, it was the advent of a new, more modern Magdalene. For me, an American with little appreciation for the centuries of tradition, it marked my arrival at Magdalene; I just happened to be female and therefore my exchange experience will forever be entwined with being part of that first cohort of women.

Growing up just outside of Detroit in a blue-collar family, winning a place at the University of Michigan wasn't even remotely on my radar, let alone that leading to studying in what seemed like the fairy tale world of Cambridge spires, candlelit hall dinners and tutorials. Even now, as I reflect some thirty-plus years later, I can hardly believe my luck to have had studied at these two world-renowned universities.

Of course, the academic experiences afforded by the scholarship were immense. At Michigan, I had studied Engineering. At Cambridge, I was able to spend my first year reading History and Philosophy of Science before returning to my Engineering background to study for a doctorate in Artificial Speech Synthesis. I can still remember the trepidation before my first tutorial essay, the sore writing hand from my first Tripos, and the wonder of attending lectures and seminars listening to legends like Karl Popper.

But academic study was only part of the amazing opportunities afforded by the exchange. As a young adult it was an incredible blessing to travel through Britain and Europe, to immerse oneself in a foreign culture, to live side-by-side with others with entirely different life experiences, to debate views and gain a more global perspective.

However, these reminiscences would be incomplete if they didn't include the fond memories of being part of that first group of women. I clearly remember a few of us convening a meeting during freshers' week where it became clear that many of us were not going to let the unique opportunity of being the first Magdalene women be missed. We were determined to



**First Magdalene Female Cricket Team c1988.**

integrate into every aspect of College life, joining clubs where we were allowed in and starting our own where that was more appropriate.

During that first year, music, JCR, MCR and subject societies, to name just a few, saw women join in. On the pitches, we fielded numerous 'first' Magdalene women's teams. Yes, I learned that netball was nothing like basketball, and cricket a far cry from baseball. We took to the Cam with our first Eight in the Autumn Fairbairns, in a decrepit clinker where my seat fell off the runners halfway through the race. Those of us who had earned College or University colours spent many an evening deciding the name and initiation rituals of our 'Wyverns-equivalent' society.

I am forever indebted to Eugene Power, and Magdalene College. They gave me the chance to make a fairy tale dream become reality with the exchange having a lasting impact on my life. Yes, while at Magdalene, I met my prince and have lived in Britain happily ever after.

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# LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS ASTRIDE A CHARGING BULLET

BY MR FRED SPAVEN (2006)

The electric vehicle revolution is upon us and I'm sure some of you reading this will have an electric car on the drive, or at least know someone who has.



To many people, however, they seem a newfangled and scary idea with range anxiety, high purchase prices and rumours of short battery life still putting off most motorists. As an engineer with a strong environmental concern, I decided to dip my toe into the world of battery vehicles and was pleasantly surprised by what I found.

For many years my profession has been restoring historic sports and racing cars and I have recently expanded into classic motorcycles (a particular passion of mine), so it seemed fun to try something a little unusual: building an electric motorbike. A part-restored 1961 350cc Royal Enfield "Bullet" would prove to be the perfect donor bike, providing the frame and cycle parts. Batteries came from a flood-damaged Nissan Leaf with the motor and various electronics sourced from specialists around the globe. The bike would never test the limits of its 50 mile range on my daily commute so for a real challenge I could think of nothing better than the longest route in Britain: Land's End to John o'Groats. All this would be done under the watchful lens

of independent film maker Finn Varney, who would use the narrative of the journey to construct a documentary about the sustainable transport revolution unfolding across the UK.

The bike, and the plan, came together through 2018 and we set off in early October with a tight filming schedule and a barely tested but wittily christened "Charging Bullet". The sun shone as we worked our way up the country visiting biogas busses in Bristol, hydrogen cars near Hereford and the University of Bristol's world-beating battery race bike. It was hard work filming and riding every day, but the brand new Charging Bullet performed faultlessly as we worked our way North. Soon, however, the weather started to close in and an unexpected icy patch caught me unawares in the Peak district. Rider and bike were thankfully unhurt and we carried on with gritted teeth. From there autumn turned to winter and our attempt on the Highlands was cut off by early snow, forcing us to detour around the lower, warmer coast roads. Finally, north of the Moray Firth, the sun shone again as I rode down into John o'Groats Harbour to share a celebratory snifter of Scotch with Finn, gazing out over the Orkneys. We had done it: 1,500 miles on an electric motorcycle designed simply to get me to work, and over 50 hours of footage in the bag.

So what do I think of battery biking? I'm converted. Riding without the noise and fuss of a petrol engine is like the very distilled essence of motorcycling, besides the obvious environmental benefits. The Charging Bullet may not have been designed for touring but it was a fantastic way to explore the British Isles, and is now working perfectly in its intended role, ferrying me along the beautiful back lanes of Herefordshire. Back at work, Spaven Engineering is now specialising in the design and manufacture of one-off electric motorcycles, alongside the more conventional classic restorations. And the documentary? It's in post-production, whittling those hours of raw footage down to 60 minutes of finished film with release planned for summer 2019.

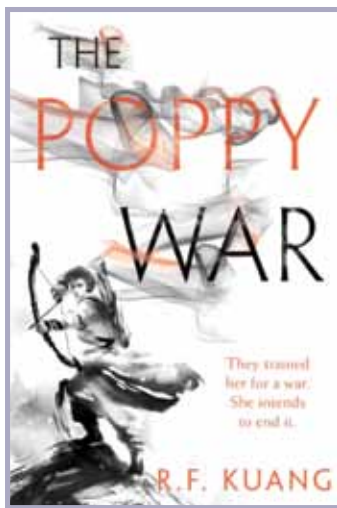
To find out more about the adventure, the bike and where you can watch the film, check out: [www.charging-bullet.co.uk](http://www.charging-bullet.co.uk)

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# SWORDS, DRAGONS, GODS AND CHINESE STUDIES

BY MISS REBECCA KUANG (2018), MARSHALL SCHOLAR

By day, I sit in the FAMES library researching Dongbei writers' wartime literature for my MPhil in Chinese Studies. By night, I write epic fantasy novels about swords, dragons, and gods.



I sold my first trilogy to HarperCollins three years ago, while I was still an undergraduate. My debut novel *The Poppy War* was published in May 2018 and has since been shortlisted or won numerous awards including the Nebula, the Crawford, the Campbell, the Compton Crook, the Goodreads Choice Award, and others. Its sequel, *The Dragon Republic*, comes out this August.

Balancing my dual careers in academia and fiction has admittedly been a nightmare. I'm currently drafting *Untitled Book #3* while balancing three course papers, my dissertation, and my freelance translation work. I get very little sleep. I've eaten the same microwave curry meal from Sainsbury's for dinner for the last two months.

But I wouldn't give any of it up. My academic studies and creative writing are wonderfully synergistic; they inform, motivate, and inspire each other. I think of my novels as a remix of Chinese history, which is so much stranger than fiction. I'm never at a loss for crazy adventures, bizarre diplomatic incidents, or military maneuvers to work into my outlines. Whenever I need inspiration for maniacal, egotistical villains, for example, I just crack open a biography of Mao Zedong. Moreover, my identity as an author lends an insider's perspective to my study of Chinese authors. I have a better idea of what they were trying to accomplish with certain craft techniques and narrative choices because I employ those same tools in my own fiction. (I tried to propose submitting a novella in lieu of a final paper for my theory and methodology course. The degree committee said no.)

Magdalene has been a wonderful place to grow as an author and a scholar, not least because it's haunted by fellow alum C.S. Lewis's ghost. I've been amazed by the encouragement and support I've received from my fellow graduate students. A few weeks ago the MCR committee asked me to do a Parlour Talk about my novels. I didn't expect many people to show up—I hadn't publicised it widely, and it was just a small, informal talk with some wine and cheese. I was shocked when I found the room packed with dozens of students including what appeared to be half of the Magdalene Boat Club.

Many writers keep "impression" diaries where they log unique experiences—experiences worth reading about—to repackage later into story details. I'm getting a lifetime's worth of those at Magdalene. I've never lived in the UK before—everything about Magdalene, Cambridge, and England has been new, bizarre, and exciting. I'm always pushing myself into new activities so that, one day, I can write about them. I book in to Formal Hall for an excuse to wear my ridiculous Harry Potter robe and to eat food I can barely see under dim candlelight. I say yes to Spoons at two in the morning so I can witness with my own eyes the unique horror that it is. I cox the M3 boat so I can bask in the sound of blades hitting the water on quiet, early mornings while the sun rises. (Bumps has been a significantly less relaxing affair.) And at the end of the day, I come back to Audley Cottage, pull out my little leather-bound ideas notebook, and jot down the most memorable things I've observed. Magdalene will without a doubt feature heavily in some future R.F. Kuang novel. Just you wait.



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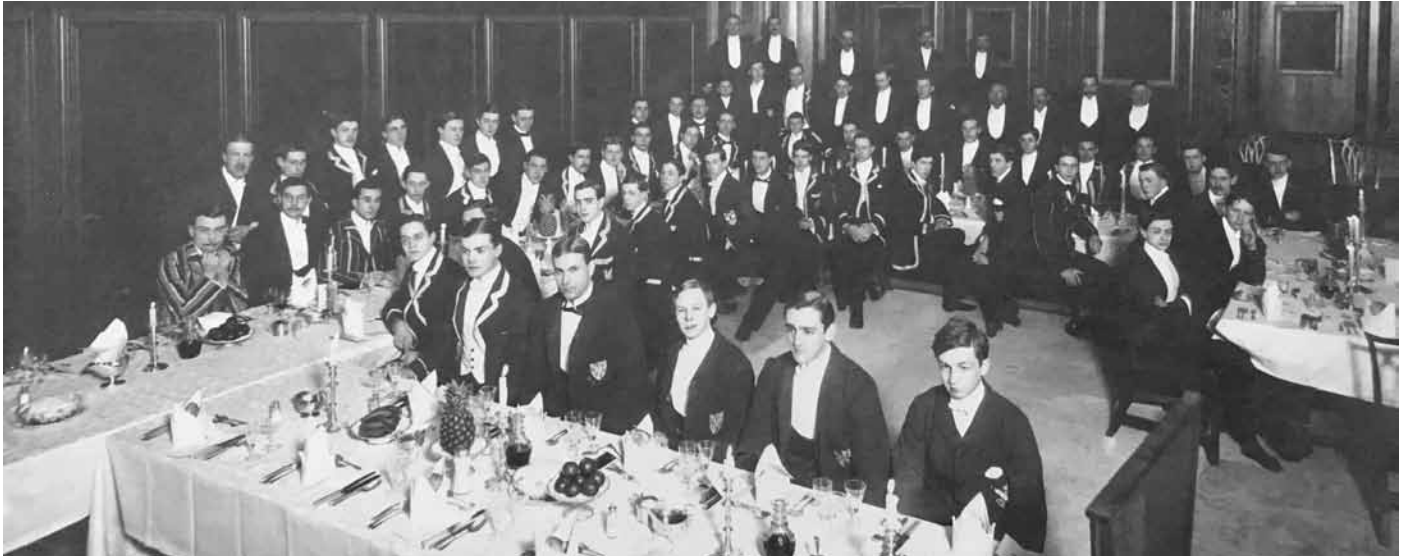
*Magdalene has been a wonderful place to grow as an author and a scholar...*

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# THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF HALL

The Hall has been a focal point of College life since it was built in 1519 under the patronage of Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham.



Hall, Sturgis Album 1907–1910.

The building appears to have changed little for the next sixty years. During this period, in 1555, the College Statues were drawn up; these stipulate that meals must be eaten in Hall unless the Master permitted otherwise. In addition, lectures were to be ‘given in the Hall of a morning between the hours of six and seven o’clock.’

Significant change occurred in the 1580s under Thomas Nevile (Master, 1582–1593). One Giles Bickmore was paid the huge sum of £10-3s-4d ‘for colouring’ the Hall walls in 1585. In 1586, Edward Lucas paid £13 for wainscoting the Hall and an additional pound for his Arms to be added. The College Accounts for the same year show that “elme trees in the backside commonly called the grove”, possibly the area which is now the Fellows Garden, were sold in order to fund the “making of a great lover” – a louvre for ventilation – in the Hall.

This architecture formed a backdrop for daily life during the seventeenth

century, although, as College records show, occasionally there was something more dramatic as well: in April 1636, Charles Gale played a prank on six other students who were dining at High Table. He tried to bribe a young servant to go into the Hall and read the wrong grace, but the boy refused. Instead, another student, Theophilus Markham, joined in, insultingly turning his back on High Table as he read an incorrect grace. When the prank was ignored, Charles Gale resorted to name-calling the other students as “very absurd fellows”. However, when the insult was turned on him, Gale exclaimed, “I will box”, and the episode ended in a bout of fisticuffs.

An overhaul of the building occurred in 1714, when the roof trusses, which had been visible from below, were covered by a flat ceiling. In addition, the Hall was given a new floor, glazing and pine panelling. The staircase and gallery leading to the Senior Combination Room were also inserted. This work

cost the grand sum of £265. The Earl of Suffolk, the College Visitor, sent his own workmen to paint his coat of arms as part of an armorial display above the dais; this still survives today.

By the early twentieth century, the walls had been painted to resemble oak, leading A. C. Benson to comment that the walls looked like they had been ‘smeared with mustard.’ Not long after this, in 1909, the decision was taken to install electricity in Hall, but, crucially, no electric light fittings. Benson’s Mastership (1915–1925) played a crucial role in transforming the Hall into its current appearance, with the insertion of a new floor, ceiling and sconces. He was also responsible for much of the heraldic glass, although some of it dates from the nineteenth century. The present colour scheme was devised in 1979 by the interior decorator, David Mlinaric. Today, in its 500th year, the Hall maintains its grand but welcoming ambience and remains the last College Hall reliant on candle light.

# JCR UPDATE

BY MISS MIA LUPOLI (2017) JCR PRESIDENT

This year's JCR committee has already done a fantastic job, despite only taking up their new positions at the beginning of Lent Term! In January, we hosted the fourth annual Magdalene-Magdalen Sports Day. Over 150 students travelled from Magdalen College, Oxford to compete in 12 sports, including rugby, football, tennis, basketball and darts. Magdalene were particularly successful in the lacrosse, hockey and darts matches! The day finished with everyone from both Colleges coming together for a big meal which was enjoyed by all. Overall, the day was a great success and we all look forward to travelling to Oxford next year.

Our Freshers' Rep, Will, organised a brilliant 'refreshers week' at the beginning of term. Students from all years got involved in a range of activities, from a movie night to a pub quiz in the bar. It was a great way to relax before the busy term ahead.

Sabrina, our Ents Officer, has organised two very popular bops with the themes 'Back to School' and 'ABC'. She, with the help of Will, also ran Wedding Formal for the first years to celebrate their College marriages, both pre- and post-drinks, decorations and a photographer to provide long lasting memories of the day. Her hard work has ensured that there was a lot of fun to be had amongst the student body during Lent.



Following on from their fantastic work last year, our Welfare Reps Sarah and Alex have worked hard to organise donut and coffee events, drop-in sessions and sexual health clinics. They provide a crucial support network for many students and are greatly appreciated members of the JCR.

LGBT+ Officer, Charli, and Womens' Officer, Lauren, organised a LGBT+/Magdaladies Formal to celebrate both LGBT+ and International Womens' Month. On International Womens' Day, Lauren organised a celebration in the bar which included a brilliant range of themed cocktails. Access Officer Laura has already overseen a number of access events, Domestic and Academic Officer, Jake, helped to ensure a smooth running of the room ballot and Services, Bar and Buttery Officer, Joe, organised a wonderful Halfway Hall for the second years.

The JCR committee has worked exceptionally hard this term to make it enjoyable for everyone! Big thanks to all the students and staff for their continued support.

## *The Secret Surfer* BY MR IAIN GATELY (1982)

Iain Gately's latest book *The Secret Surfer* has been shortlisted for the Edward Stanford Lonely Planet Adventure Travel Book of the Year 2019. Iain is a critically-acclaimed author who has explored history, culture, and festivals in his prior books, which include the stories of humanity's obsessions with tobacco, alcohol, and commuting.

Whilst recovering from a hip replacement operation, Iain embarks on a personal journey of recovery, setting out to realise a lifetime's ambition: to catch a tube, that evanescent space inside the unfolding wave of which the surfer's dreams are made. In all his years of surfing, Iain has never caught one and he realises it is now or never.

Iain's quest takes him to the Atlantic beaches of England's West Country, and to the sandbars and reefs of Galicia and the Canary Island. By turns funny, energetic and inspiring, *The Secret Surfer* is a tale of self-knowledge through endeavour, a blend of black humour, adventure

and soul-searching. Above all, it is a rousing call to all of us not to give up too soon. Philip Marsden in *The Spectator* writes about the "peculiar intensity of involvement" which makes it so enjoyable.

*The Secret Surfer* is an alternative travel book; it is an energetic and often humorous exploration of an activity that attracts loners, obsessives and eccentrics, split by tribal divides and muses on whether surfing is a sport, a way of life, or even a religious experience.

Iain's quest, whether it ends in triumph or in failure, will offer a similar mixture of introspection.

Title: *The Secret Surfer* Publisher: Head of Zeus  
ISBN: 978-1784974985



# Forthcoming EVENTS

**1 JUNE 2019**

Buckingham Society Luncheon

**12 JUNE 2019**

MiC Summer Drinks Party

**15 JUNE 2019**

MBC May Bumps Marquee

**26 JUNE 2019**

Graduands' Garden Party

**2 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Magdalene Dinner in Kuala Lumpur

**3 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Magdalene Dinner in Singapore

**7 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Magdalene Dinner in Sydney

**11 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Magdalene Dinner in Hong Kong

**29 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Donors' Day

**1 NOVEMBER 2019**

Magdalene Dinner in New York

**4 NOVEMBER 2019**

Magdalene Dinner in Seattle

**6 NOVEMBER 2019**

Magdalene Dinner in San Francisco

**23 NOVEMBER 2019**

Halfway Campaign Dinner

**30 NOVEMBER 2019**

Modern and Medieval Languages Dinner

**6 DECEMBER 2019**

Annual Carol Concert

Additional events may be added; please check [www.magd.cam.ac.uk/events](http://www.magd.cam.ac.uk/events) and look out for updated listings in Magdalene eMatters. If you are interested in attending or would like additional information please email [events@magd.cam.ac.uk](mailto:events@magd.cam.ac.uk).

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of Magdalene College, Cambridge.



## MAY BUMPS

The College and the Mallory Club invite all Members to cheer on the Magdalene Boat Club (MBC) at this year's May Bumps Marquee on Saturday 15 June; racing begins at 11.45am. Get ready for an afternoon of exciting rowing action with drinks, snacks and a punt to get across the river! The MBC Marquee will be located on Caius Meadow close to Fen Ditton. Please come and give our crews your fulsome support!

MBC Alumnae are invited to celebrate 30 years on the river at the Boathouse on Sunday 16 June at 11.30 am. For further details please contact Beth Forsyth (2013) at [info@malloryclub.com](mailto:info@malloryclub.com).

## Non-Resident Members' Guest Nights 2019–2020

19 October 2019	These evenings are hosted by a group of
15 November 2019	Fellows and include pre-dinner drinks.
25 January 2020	They offer Members the opportunity of
7 March 2020	bringing one guest to dine at High Table.
25 April 2020	Please note that numbers of NRMs are
23 May 2020	limited to a maximum of ten at any one
	night. Please book via the Alumni &
	Development office.

## REUNIONS

### Reunions in 2019

**FRIDAY 20 SEPTEMBER**

Dinner for those who  
matriculated in 2004–2006

**FRIDAY 27 SEPTEMBER**

Dinner for those who  
matriculated in 2007–2009

### Reunions in 2020

**FRIDAY 3 APRIL**

Dinner for those who  
matriculated in 1960–1963

**SATURDAY 2 MAY**

Lunch for those who  
matriculated up to 1957

**FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER**

Dinner for those who  
matriculated in 1964–1967

**FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER**

Dinner for those who  
matriculated in 1968–1971

Reunion invitations will be sent out three months in advance. The programme usually begins at 4.30pm with tea and coffee in the Senior Combination Room. Pre-dinner drinks will be served in the Cripps Gallery or Pepys' Cloisters at 7.15pm, with dinner being served in Hall from 8pm. There will be an opportunity to visit the Pepys Library before dinner and to attend Evensong in Chapel. Those who matriculated in 2013 will be invited to take their MA in person or in absentia in 2020.